

Message Text

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TAGS: EFIS, JA

SUBJECT: NORTHERN JAPAN REACTION TO U.S. 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE

1. SUMMARY: FISHERMEN'S GROUPS IN NORTHERN JAPAN ARE LOBBYING HARD TO BLOCK ANY SHARP REDUCTION IN JAPAN'S TRADITIONAL CATCH LEVELS IN THE U.S. 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE. THEY FEEL THAT MAJOR CONCESSIONS ON THIS ISSUE BY JAPAN AT THE FORTHCOMING U.S.-JAPAN FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS WOULD ENCOURAGE OTHER COUNTRIES TO IMPOSE SIMILAR OR MORE SEVERE RESTRICTIONS LEADING ULTIMATELY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JAPAN'S PELAGIC FISHING INDUSTRY. BUT THEIR SENSE OF CRISIS IS NOT THUS FAR SHARED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN THIS PART OF JAPAN, WHICH APPEARS TO BE RESERVING JUDGMENT ON THE U.S. 200-MILE ZONE PENDING THE OUTCOME OF THE U.S.-JAPAN NEGOTIATIONS. UNSURE OF THE EXTENT OF POPULAR AND GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT, AND WORRIED BY THE "HARDLINE" POSTURE ADOPTED BY THE U.S., FISHERMEN AND THEIR LEADERS FEEL THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL END IN A DEAD-LOCK, BUT HAVE LITTLE IDEA HOW TO DEAL WITH THE RESULTING SITU-

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ATION. END SUMMARY.

2. PUBLIC OPINION: THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN NORTHERN JAPAN, WHILE EXPRESSING SOME APPREHENSION, DOES NOT YET SEEM GREATLY AGITATED BY THE ISSUES AT STAKE IN THE FORTHCOMING U.S.-JAPAN FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS. PRESS COVERAGE OF THESE ISSUES HAS BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY ARTICLES DEALING WITH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LOCKHEED CASE, AND FISHERMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS HAVE THUS FAR HAD LITTLE SUCCESS IN AROUSING MUCH PUBLIC CONCERN OR SUPPORT. DESPITE WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL RESULT IN SOME DECREASE IN JAPAN'S FISHING CATCH IN U.S. COASTAL WATERS, THERE IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THIS DECREASE AND ITS PROBABLE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY. THIS UNCERTAINTY ALSO EXTENDS TO THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD JAPANESE FISHING OPERATIONS WITHIN ITS 200 MILE ZONE; WHILE THERE IS MUTED RESENTMENT AGAINST THE "HARDLINE" POSTURE DISPLAYED BY THE U.S. TOWARD JAPAN, THERE IS A GENERAL RELUCTANCE TO BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. WOULD IMPERIL ITS RELATIONS WITH JAPAN BY DRASTICALLY REDUCING JAPAN'S FISHING CATCH. IN SUM, THE PUBLIC HERE APPEARS TO BE RESERVING JUDGMENT ON THE U.S. 200 MILE ZONE UNTIL BOTH THE U.S. NEGOTIATING POSITION AND THE EXTENT OF THE PROBABLE DAMAGE TO JAPAN'S FISHING INDUSTRY ARE CLEARER.

3. FISHERMEN'S ATTITUDES: THE LEADERS OF LOCAL FISHERMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS, AND THEIR SUPPORTERS IN BUSINESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES, ARE MORE SKEPTICAL OF THE WILLINGNESS OF THE U.S. TO MODERATE ITS NEGOTIATING STAND TO ACCOMMODATE JAPANESE FISHING INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE REPRESENTATIONS TO U.S. LEADERS IN RECENT MONTHS, THEY CLAIM TO SEE LITTLE INDICATION THAT THE U.S. WILL RESPECT JAPAN'S TRADITIONAL CATCH LEVELS IN ALLOCATING FOREIGN FISHING QUOTAS WITHIN ITS 200 MILE ZONE. IN ANTICIPATION OF A U.S. DEMAND FOR A SHARP REDUCTION IN JAPAN'S CATCH, THEY HAVE MOUNTED A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO PERSUADE THE MOFA AND FISHERY AGENCY TO INSIST THAT JAPAN BE GUARANTEED A QUOTA AT OR NEAR THE LEVEL OF ITS CURRENT CATCH IN U.S. COASTAL WATERS. THEIR PRINCIPAL CONCERN AT PRESENT IS THAT MOFA NEGOTIATORS, WHO ARE FELT TO LACK EXPERTISE IN FISHERY MATTERS AND SYMPATHY FOR DOMESTIC FISHERY INTERESTS, MIGHT NOT PRESS THIS DEMAND WITH SUFFICIENT VIGOR IN U.S.-JAPAN NEGOTIATIONS. FEW PROFESS MUCH OPTIMISM ON THE CHANCES FOR AN EARLY COMPROMISE ON THE QUOTA ISSUE, AND MANY EXPECT THE NEGOTIATIONS TO END IN DEADLOCK.

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TIATIONS TO END IN DEADLOCK.

4. ALTHOUGH LOCAL FISHERMEN ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOME REDUCTION OF JAPAN'S CURRENT CATCH IN U.S. COASTAL WATERS IS PROBABLY INEVITABLE AND, WITHIN LIMITS, TOLERABLE, THEY FEEL THAT MAJOR CONCESSIONS TO THE U.S. AT THIS STAGE COULD IGNITE AN INTERNATIONAL CHAIN REACTION LEADING ULTIMATELY TO THE VIRTUAL DESTRUCTION OF JAPAN'S PELAGIC FISHING INDUSTRY. IN ADDITION TO THE DIRECT DAMAGE

ANTICIPATED FROM THE IMPOSITION OF U.S. FISHING QUOTAS, THEY FEAR THAT OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE SOVIET UNION, WILL INVOKE THESE QUOTAS TO JUSTIFY PLACING SIMILAR OR EVEN MORE SEVERE LIMITATIONS ON JAPANESE FISHING OPERATIONS IN THEIR COASTAL WATERS. THIS FEAR IS PARTICULARLY ACUTE IN HOKKAIDO WHICH TAKES 40 PERCENT OF ITS ANNUAL CATCH FROM SOVIET COASTAL WATERS (AS OPPOSED TO ONLY 10 PERCENT FROM WATERS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE U.S. 200 MILE ZONE), AND WHICH HAS LITTLE REASON TO EXPECT MAGNANIMOUS TREATMENT FROM THE SOVIETS. HOKKAIDO FISHERMEN FEEL THAT IF THEY CANNOT EXTRACT CONCESSIONS FROM THE U.S., THEY WILL BE UNABLE TO HOLD THE LINE AGAINST THE SOVIETS WITH WHOM THEY HAVE EVEN LESS LEVERAGE.

5. POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS: IN SOME QUARTERS HERE, A BREAKDOWN IN THE U.S.-JAPAN FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE WELCOMED IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO A POLITICAL CRISIS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES NECESSITATING HIGH-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH THE U.S. WOULD PRESUMABLY BE UNDER PRESSURE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO PRESERVE AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH JAPAN. IN ADDITION, SEVERAL LEADERS OF LOCAL FISHERMEN'S GROUPS HAVE HINTED THAT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO MOBILIZE MASSIVE EXPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC DISPLEASURE TO SUPPLEMENT JAPAN'S DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. BUT THERE ARE FEW INDICATIONS SO FAR THAT SUCH PUBLIC SUPPORT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, AND FISHERMEN, WHO LACK THE POLITICAL CLOUT OF FARMERS, ARE EVEN UNSURE OF THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF THE MIKE GOVERNMENT. ASIDE FROM A VAGUE HOPE THAT THE U.S. WILL ULTIMATELY RESPOND TO THEIR APPEALS, FISHERMEN AND THEIR LEADERS IN THIS PART OF JAPAN ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT TO DO NEXT, AND MANY SEEM CONTENT TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH THE U.S.

6. COMMENT: THAT FISHERMEN AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE, THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN NORTHERN JAPAN ARE CONCERNED OVER ANTICIPATED ILL-EFFECTS OF ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S. 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE IS OBVIOUS. SO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FAR, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW SPECIFICS OF THE U.S. POSITION, THEY ARE AT A LOSS AS TO HOW THEY SHOULD PROCEED. LACKING DATA, PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER GROUPS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO COME UP WITH MEANINGFUL IMPACT STUDIES. IN CONSEQUENCE, THEIR PLEAS TO THE GOJ ARE SIMPLY THAT, TO MAXIMUM DEGREE POSSIBLE, JAPANESE NEGOTIATORS PROTECT "ESTABLISHED FISHING INTERESTS." ONCE AUGUST NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEGUN, AND BETTER SENSE OF WHAT IMPLICATIONS OF 200 MILE ZONE ARE EMERGES, WE EXPECT HEIGHTENED INTEREST IN FISHING ISSUE AND CLEARER DEFINITION OF LOCAL REACTION AND RESPONSE. FARRAR

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